



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

with UCC Westerly

LESSONS & CAROLS

December 21, 2025 @ 9:45am

In-person and

Broadcast live from our sanctuary

CCLI Streaming License #21022154

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GATHERING MUSIC — [WORDS & MUSIC: Doug Brummund, ©2022 B.R. Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission.]

PASTOR'S WELCOME

PRELUDE — *Celebration of Christmas*
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DEACON'S GREETING

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLE OF JOY

Pastor: Christmas is almost here; our journey is almost complete. The candles of Hope, Peace and Love already illumine our way and today God's light shines brighter still! (Pastor lights the three candles.)

Deacon: From the Gospel of John, the 15th chapter, verses 9-11: Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love just as I have done. ... I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

One: Soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus as we worship this morning with joy in our hearts.

All: We remember the words the angel shared on that long ago night, "Behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all people."

One: We light this candle to proclaim the coming of joy in the person of the Christ Child.

All: We remember that this joy is ours always, not only at Christmas.

(The Deacon lights the fourth candle and then leads the Unison Prayer.)

Unison Prayer of Reflection

O Holy One, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. Joy surrounds us and yet we know that for some, this is a difficult and sad time of year. May you enfold them in your gentle embrace as they long for comfort and peace. Please embolden all of us to find joy that does not depend on other things and other people, but on you alone. Fill us with your joy, Amazing and Merciful God, so that we may share it far and wide in this too often joyless world. Amen.

OPENING SONG – *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*
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W&R#218

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN LESSONS AND CAROLS
Telling the story of how Christmas came to be...

First Lesson	Genesis 1:1-5, 26, 31; 2:1-3	Tim Tilney
Second Lesson	Exodus 3:7-15	Kathy Tarasuk
Third Lesson	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	Ede Steele
Fourth Lesson	Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9	Jenny Brummund
Special Music --	<i>One Special Star</i>	Erin Blake, Soloist
Fifth Lesson	Luke 1: 26-35, 38	Debbie Micelli
Sixth Lesson	Luke 2:1-17	Lynn Murray
Seventh Lesson	Matthew 2:1-12	Sandi Davis
Eighth Lesson	John 1:1-5	Gary Davis

CAROL *“O Come All Ye Faithful”*
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W&R#182, v. 1-2

#A MOMENT TO BREATHE

A TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayer & Silent Prayers

The Lord's Prayer in whatever words are most comfortable for you.

Musical Response

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Anthem – *Christmas Is All About Love*

The Voice Choir

[WORDS: Tom Long & MUSIC: Alan Pote ©2025 Hope Publishing Company, used by permission]

*Doxology *“Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here
below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.”*

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CLOSING SONG -- *Once in Royal David's City*
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W&R#183, v. 1-3

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION

[adapted from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 32]

Mary spoke the words of faith and became the human vessel through which God entered history. Let her words be our own: “Let it be with me according to your word.” Amen.

Sung Response – Let There Be Peace on Earth

W&R#614

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PASSING OF THE PEACE

POSTLUDE – Gloria from the 12th Mass

[W.A. Mozart, arrang. J. Hiller, Oliver Ditson Company. ©Public Domain]

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**#A MOMENT TO BREATHE** is an experience of Thich Nhat Hanh’s breath of 10 exercise. It is very simple, inviting you to breathe as you normally would but counting each breath in and each breath out until you reach 10. This is a remarkably simple but highly effective breathing exercise that calms your mind and heart. Enjoy! 😊

**TO ANY VISITORS WITH US THIS MORNING, WELCOME!** We are so glad you decided to join us! We would love to be able to connect with you after your visit today. If you are comfortable doing so, please locate one of our contact cards in the pew welcome folder or in the back of the sanctuary to fill out and leave in one of the offering plates. We also hope you will join us for fellowship time if you are so inclined!

**A REMINDER OF OUR CHRISTMAS CARD SUNDAY** today during Fellowship. We will be writing out Christmas cards for the folks we don’t see often in worship, whatever the reason.

**Our Diaconate Person of the Week for this week is Bethany Foster.** Please feel free to be in touch with her with your joys and concerns knowing that we care about you every day.

**\*ABOUT THE OFFERING.** We offer our deepest gratitude to our members and friends who are so generous with their pledges and financial gifts to the church, both those here in person and those joining online. Online participants are invited to give online via our “Donate” button @ [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org) or mail your checks, made payable to UCC Westerly, to us at 9 Castle Hill Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379. **A REMINDER that offering plates** are located at each entrance to the sanctuary. Thank you! **Gifts to the denominational CHRISTMAS FUND to support retired clergy and missionaries struggling financially are also being received.** Kindly use the purple CHRISTMAS FUND envelopes available.

**THE PRAYER MINISTRIES** of this church are many and varied and you are welcome to participate in any or all of them. In the sanctuary, you will find prayer notebooks by either door within which to write specific prayer requests for Sunday. You will also find prayer candle tables at which you may light a candle for your own prayer concerns. You will also find in the front pews prayer shawls and prayer bears to offer comfort to those struggling. For more information on our prayer ministries please speak with any Deacon or Rev. Ruth at any time.

***Thank you to everyone who donated a poinsettia to decorate our chancel area for today and Christmas Eve! A list of those donations is attached.***

THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERLY, UCC  
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**OUR STAFF:**

The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth, Pastor  
David Cranmer, Organist & Choirs Director  
Jerin Peloquin, Office Coordinator

*PLEASE NOTE that the church office will be closed on Thursday, December 25 for Christmas Day and on Thursday, January 1 for New Year's Day.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

*From the Staff!!*

*Rev. Ruth     Dav     Jerin*



**A REMINDER OF SERVICES HAPPENING AT UCC WESTERLY DURING THE REMAINDER OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE**

***Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service @ 4pm***

Traditional festive service of candles, carols, special music and Communion with a Christmas message from Rev. Ruth. **BRING YOUR BELLS TO WELCOME THE CHRIST CHILD & YOUR CRECHE PIECE FOR A BLESSING!**

***Sunday, December 28 @ 9:45am*** – A joyful celebration of Christmas for the child in all of us!

***Sunday, January 4, 2025 @ 9:45am*** – **EPIPHANY & our STAR SUNDAY CELEBRATION** Festive service of Communion, Light and Star Words for the coming year

## THE READINGS

### **1<sup>st</sup> Lesson – Genesis 1:1-5, 26; 31; 2:1-3**

*Tim Tilney*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson – Exodus 3:7-15**

*Kathy Tarasuk*

Then the LORD said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you":

This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Lesson – Isaiah 9:2, 6-7**

*Ede Steele*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.  
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9**

*Jenny Brummund*

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Luke 1:26-35, 38**

*Debbie Micelli*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Luke 2:1-17**

*Lynn Murray*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child.



## **7<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Matthew 2:1-12**

*Sandi Davis*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Lesson – John 1:1-5**

*Gary Davis*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.